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ABSTRACT

Many colleges have initiated studies in conjunction with the development of campus alcohol programs, but few go beyond the student body to describe alcohol use by all the individuals on a college campus. All fulltime students, faculty and staff of a small campus community were surveyed to compare generational (students vs. staff) and organizational differences. The two variables clearly divided the subjects in terms of use and behavior. Results showed high consumption and more anti-social behavior among students, and more responsible alcohol use among staff and faculty. Fraternity and sorority members reported higher usage of alcohol and more anti-social behavior than other students. Athletes reported more beer drinking and more driving while drinking. Students active in performing arts were less likely to be high consumers of beer and less likely to drive while drinking. The findings suggest that social variables such as membership expectations and performance requirements may account for the reported differences in alcohol use. (JAC)

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Alcohol and Aggressive Behaviors: Generational and Organizational Differences in a Campus Community

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Alcohol and Aggressive Behaviors: Generational and Organizational Differences in a Campus Community

The data we are reporting today are from the first stage of a nine year longitudinal and cross sectional project designed to describe patterns of alcohol use within a small campus community. Many colleges have initiated studies in conjunction with developing campus alcohol programs. In contrast this study was not undertaken for any administrative policy reasons but was an interdisciplinary research effort proposed by a psychologist and a sociologist. Self report data were obtained from a survey of all full-time students, faculty and staff at a small private college in the Southeast. General background information, frequency and quantity of consumption of different alcoholic beverages, reasons for drinking, perceived effects of drinking, and reported behavioral consequences of drinking were examined for the entire campus community.

All full-time students, faculty and staff during the Spring 1980 semester were included in the sample. The student sample was a stratified random sample and was divided into eight sampling periods. Proportionate numbers of Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors, Males and Females were assigned (using a table of random numbers) to each sampling period. Student members of a social research class participated in the project by contacting subjects assigned to them, and remaining with the students while the subjects completed the survey instruments. Completed questionnaires were returned anonymously and collected after each sampling period. Questionnaires were completed and returned by 79.8% of the students (N=595).

Full-time faculty and staff members were given questionnaires personally

by the principal researchers and were asked to return their completed questionnaires anonymously through campus mail to the first author. A small card acknowledging return of the instrument was sent separately to the second author. Anonymous survey documents were returned by 94% of the faculty (N=54) and 88% of the Staff (N=61). A total of 700 questionnaires were received.

It is possible to identify groups within any campus community on at least two dimensions, Generational and Organizational. The subject variable which we call Generation (i.e. Students vs. Faculty & Staff) was one of the variables of original interest. The other subject variable, Organizational Affiliation, was set up with the expectation that there might be an inverse relationship between alcohol consumption and participation in campus activities. The social isolation literature suggests heavy alcohol use is associated with low community participation. But, for our sample, isolation and lack of participation were not related in any way to patterns of use. Going beyond amount of participation, we were able to identify individuals as being affiliated with one or more of three organizational categories: Social Fraternities and Sororities (Greeks), Athletics, and Performing Arts.

Results

Our two variables Generation and Organization, clearly divide our subjects in terms of frequency and quantity of alcohol use and are related reliably to a range of behaviors that can be described as antisocial or aggressive. These aggressive behaviors were associated clearly and reliably with high alcohol use defined in terms of both frequency and

quantity. On the dimension of Generation, Students are more likely than are Faculty & Staff to be frequent beer drinkers (almost 52% at least weekly) and to drink beer in larger quantities (34.4% usually drinking 5 or more cans). Forty percent of Faculty & Staff report they never drink beer and only 9% drink 5 or more when they do drink it. Wine drinking is not heavy and is lower among Students, but 34% of Students report drinking from 3 to more than 6 glasses of wine at a time. A similar picture of heavy consumption is seen for liquor where Students are significantly more likely to report consuming 5 or more drinks (28.5% to 4.4%) or at least 3 or 4 (40% to 20%). (Probability values for these differences range from .01 to .001.)

Generational differences in some of our other variables are summarized in Table 1. When asked when they drink, or their reasons for drinking our Generational groups do not differ in their major reasons, i.e. sociability (91%), enjoyment of taste (86%), and to go along with friends (70%), but for those reasons that might be considered antisocial, i.e. drinking to get drunk, and drinking when angry, there are significant differences. Sixty-six percent of Students but only 11% of Faculty & Staff say they drink to get drunk. Students are more likely to report drinking when they are angry and feeling less angry when they drink than are Faculty & Staff. Yet Students significantly more often report feeling more aggressive when they drink. In addition Students are more likely to report getting into fights and arguments while drinking, and damaging property after drinking.

Several of our questions dealt with the use of motor vehicles. Students more often than Faculty & Staff report combining drinking and driving: driving after drinking, driving when they know they've had too much to drink, and drinking while driving. Note in Table 1 that

more than 62% of the Students admit to drinking while driving.

Despite the differences between Faculty & Staff and Students in reporting these antisocial or aggressive behaviors there are no significant differences in receiving criticism from friends or family, getting into trouble with any college administration, having trouble with the law, or being arrested for driving under the influence.

The variable Organizational Affiliation differentiated our respondents in several ways. With a few singular exceptions the antisocial behaviors reported did not distinguish persons in Athletic organizations and persons in the Performing Arts from those in the rest of the college community. You can see in Table 2 that the three driving variables: driving after drinking, driving when you know you have had too much, and driving while drinking were significantly less likely to be reported by individuals in the Performing Arts. Table 3 shows the two variables that were significantly more often reported by those in Athletic organizations: drinking while driving, and damaging property.

In contrast to membership in these organizations, Fraternity and Sorority membership was reliably associated with most of the antisocial behaviors. (See Table 4) While there was no significant difference between Greeks and non-Greeks in reporting drinking when angry, Greeks were more likely than non-Greeks to report drinking to get drunk and were also more likely to report feeling more aggressive when they drink. Greeks are also significantly more likely to report getting into arguments or fights and damaging property. In addition the driving variables distinguished the Fraternity and Sorority members from the rest of the community. Members of these social organizations were significantly

more likely to report driving after drinking, driving when you know you've had too much, and drinking while driving.

Not only were Greeks more likely to report these anti-social behaviors, they were also more likely to report experiencing some negative consequences: receiving criticism from friends, getting into trouble with college administration, getting into trouble with the law, and DUI arrests. There were no significant differences between Greeks and non-Greeks in receiving criticism from family on the subject of drinking.

Linking the Organizational variable with these aggressive and anti-social behaviors is an arbitrarily defined dichotomy of High and Low Alcohol Use. Using an additive combination of frequency and quantity measures subjects were divided into two Use categories, High Use and Low Use for Beer and for Liquor. Wine Use categories were not computed becuase of the lower overall frequency of wine consumption. The definition of High and Low Use was broad and clearly arbitrary. High Use includes a range of people from those consuming more than 6 drinks at a time at least once yearly - to those consuming from 1 or 2 to more than 6 daily. The Low Use category included within it those consuming less than 1 drink on a daily basis as well as those reporting consumption of from 3 to more than 6 drinks at a time yearly or less often. Approximately 40% of our sample fell into the High Use category, 50% into Low Use, and 10% were dropped from this analysis as non-users.

As shown in Table 5 High Use was found to be associated with aggressive behavior. Persons in the High Beer Use category compared with those in Low Beer Use more often report drinking to get drunk, feeling more aggressive when they drink, getting into arguments and fights, and damaging property.

High Users also are more likely to report driving after, driving when they have had too much, and driving while drinking. With the exception of drinking to get drunk, the same pattern discriminates High Liquor Use from Low Liquor Use. Of those respondents (overall very few) who report smoking marijuana when they drink, significantly more fell into the High Use categories for both Beer and Liquor. Although relatively few of our subjects report being criticized by friends or family or getting into trouble with the college administration, of those who do report these consequences High Users receive more criticism and get into trouble more frequently than do Low Users.

When we looked at Organizational Affiliation with the Use variable we again found significant differences between those persons in the Performing Arts and those in Athletic organizations and the remainder of the sample. Respondents in the Performing Arts are more likely to be in the Low Beer Use category (71.3% and 58.4%) ($p < .02$). In contrast persons in Athletic organizations are more likely to come under High Beer Use (53.3% and 34.7%, $p < .01$.) Neither of these Organizational groups differ from the rest of the sample in terms of High or Low Liquor Use. The majority fall under the heading of Low Use of Liquor. The other organizational group presents a different picture. Fraternity and Sorority members compared with all others in the community are more likely to be in the High Use groups for both Beer (62.9% and 31.7%) and Liquor (41% and 17.6%, p's $< .01$).

Discussion

This study is the first one, of which we are aware, that has gone beyond the student body to describe use of beverage alcohol by all of

the individuals on a college campus. Other studies of alcohol use (Engs, 1977; Hanson, 1977; Straus and Bacon, 1953; Wechsler and McFadden, 1979) reporting data from students only have found lower percentages for consumption as well as for those aggressive behaviors mentioned here. The Generational differences found in our study appear to reflect high consumption and more anti-social behavior among students in addition to a pattern of more responsible alcohol use by those individuals who could serve as mentors or models. This appears true not only for consumption but also for those antisocial behaviors with which high consumption clearly is associated.

Organizational differences appear in both consumption and aggressive behavior. Members of Fraternities and Sororities not only report higher use of alcohol than do other members of the community but also report themselves engaging in behaviors that can be considered antisocial. Members of Athletic organizations differ only in consuming beer more often and in higher quantities, in property damage, and in driving while drinking. Current statutes in South Carolina make it illegal to drink liquor while driving, but not beer or wine. In clear contrast to the Fraternity and Sorority members and to those athletically inclined, individuals in the Performing Arts are much less likely to be high consumers of beer and differ significantly from others in the campus community in being less likely to combine drinking and driving. These Organizational differences obviously spring from differential expectancies and differential emphases for members. One need not reflect at length on differences in membership expectations, performance requirements, and social contexts, to find social variables that could account for these reported differences in alcohol use.

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TABLE 1

Generational Differences and Similarities

(Data in Percentages)

	Faculty & Staff	Students
To get drunk***	11.1	65.7
Drink when angry*	11.9	28.6
Feel less angry***	15.0	45.8
Feel more aggressive***	22.6	54.6
Arguments or fights***	9.7	39.9
Damage Property**	2.0	25.1
Drive after***	62.4	69.9
Drive too much**	28.7	49.5
Drink while driving***	28.4	62.6
Friend criticism	5.8	17.3
Family criticism	6.8	18.3
Administrative trouble	-	5.8
Trouble with law	1.9	10.2
DUI	-	4.0

*$p < .02$

**$p < .01$

***$p < .001$

TABLE 2

Variables Related to Performing Arts Affiliation

(Data in Percentages)

	Others	Performing Arts
Drive after**	71.2	45.8
Drive too much*	48.6	33.4
Drink while driving**	60.4	41.2

*$p < .05$

**$p < .01$

TABLE 3

Variables Associated with Athletic Affiliation

(Data in Percentages)

	Others	Athletics
Damage property*	17.9	32.7
Drink while driving*	51.9	72.6

*$p < .01$

TABLE 4

Variables Related to Social Sorority and Fraternity Affiliation

(Data in Percentages)

	Non-Greek	Greek
To get drunk***	53.5	76.1
Feel more aggressive***	45.4	62.9
Arguments or fights***	29.2	51.7
Damage property***	18.0	32.2
Drive after***	62.3	82.7
Drive too much***	38.0	54.4
Drink while driving***	51.7	73.5
Friend criticism***	12.4	23.4
Administrative trouble*	4.4	6.8
Trouble with law***	5.6	16.6
DUI**	1.7	6.3

*$p < .05$

**$p < .02$

***$p < .01$

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TABLE 5

Variables Significantly Related to Use*

(Data in Percentages)

Beer			Liquor	
High	Low		High	Low
92	33	To get drunk		n.s.
65	39	Feel more aggressive	70	43
68	14	Arguments or fights	63	26
42	7	Damage property	46	13
93	50	Drive after	95	59
74	25	Drive too much	72	37
89	33	Drink while driving	85	48
40	6	Marijuana use	40	13
25	8	Friend criticism	29	11
26	7	Family criticism	31	11
9	2	Administrative trouble	10	3

*All p's $< .01$